

Certain Care

Uncertain Times

2021 Annual Report
Erie VA Medical Center

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health Administration
Erie VA Medical Center



Message from the Director

Erie VA Medical Center made exceptional progress in 2021 as the best place for Veteran care and the best place to work.

Our employees, Veterans, and caregivers came together across northwest Pennsylvania to consistently address rapidly evolving challenges. Working as one, we continued to care for Veterans, while meeting the uncertain demands presented by COVID-19.

Our strategic priorities and partnerships remain in place. Our quality protocols are improving outcomes.

The events of the past year revealed the certainty of Erie VA as a High Reliability Organization – prepared, enabled, and empowered to meet the needs of Veterans, while keeping our communities safe.

Our facility is proud to consistently lead the way in these uncertain times.

Thank you for your continued confidence, trust, and support as we continue to navigate the pandemic.

John Gennaro
Director, Erie VAMC

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Certain Care Uncertain Times



Western Market Initiative | Increasing Access to Care

In support of the Western Market Initiative, the Erie VAMC continues to work toward personalized, proactive, patient-driven health care. Through our established collaborative programs, we expanded access to specialty care services to Veterans in the market to include cardiology, ophthalmology, and rheumatology – maintaining a continuum of care within VA.

Cardiology

Erie VAMC witnessed significant travel time and mileage reimbursement cost savings

A total estimated savings of nearly \$220,000 for the Erie VA Medical Center

Approximately 1,568 Veterans have benefited from the enhanced services now being offered

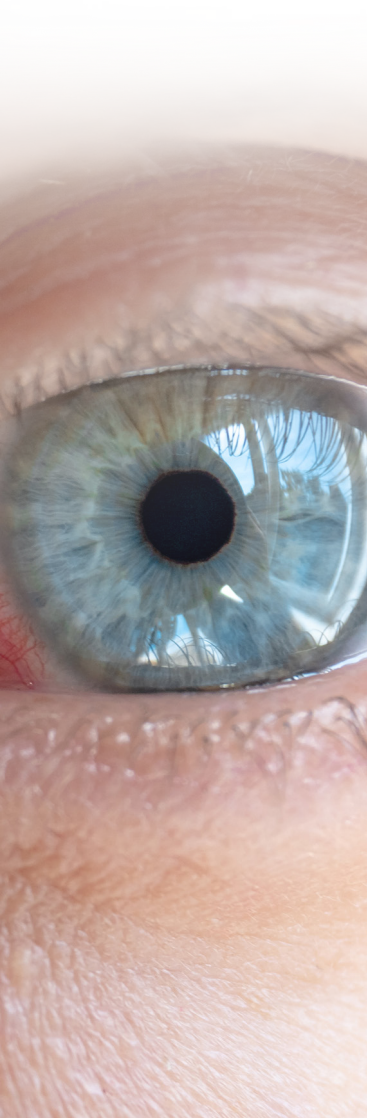


Ophthalmology (Cataract Surgery)

Cataract surgery currently offered 1 day per month

Expansion of services will increase to 4 days per month

Creates opportunity to recruit local Erie ophthalmologists services (fee based)



Surgical Services Expansion

Currently 2 operating rooms available for surgical services

Allocated funds from Western Market partnership expands services to include a third operating room and/or hiring additional staff

Supports cataract services and increases services in endoscopy, urology, orthopedics, and general surgery



V-consult

This program will enable the Erie VA to offer an increased array of virtual care to Veterans in rural areas who have difficulty traveling

Additional anticipated specialties in V-consult include endocrinology, rheumatology, & orthopedics



Positive Highlights | Top Accomplishments

Setting the Standard

Erie VAMC submitted 7 individuals nominations and 4 team nominations – totaling 123 staff – for consideration in the Federal Executive Board (FEB) Excellence in Government Awards Program. We are proud to report that our team continues to rank among the best in the Federal Government workforce demonstrating your exemplary commitment to making a difference in the lives of Veterans every day. Erie VAMC received the Federal Executive Board (FEB) Outstanding Large Team Gold Award for Cardiology, along with five individual award winners.



VISN 4 Western Market Initiative Cardiology Team



**Federal Executive Board (FEB)
Outstanding Large
Team Gold Award**



**Federal Executive Board
Chairman's Excellence
in Government
Award for Cardiology**

VISN 4 Western Market Initiative Cardiology Team:

Dr. Brahma Sharma, Heidi Richter, Ramona Mysnyk, Lorrie Szablewski, Jan Ward, Fran Maney, Christy Mayes, Holly Mukina, Angela Otto, Janine Shelatz, Amy Hardesty, Amy Walter Jennifer Armstrong, Denise Erford, Denise Lipinski, Mary-Catherine McCormick, Dr. Borys Loza, Dr. David Lavin (retired)

FEB Excellence in Government Awards Recipients



Heroic Act Award

Michael Muscato, Respiratory Therapist



Heroic Act Award

Lisa Dylewski, Rehab RN



Supervisor/Manager in an Administrative Series

Scott Hesson, Chief of EMS



Outstanding Service to the Public

Dorene Sommers, Associate Director, Patient Care Services



Rookie of the Year

Briana Cummings, Visual Information Specialist

Outstanding Service to the Public

VISN 4 Disaster Emergency Medical Personnel System (DEMPS) Team:

Dr. Ishwer Bharwani, Lemuel Colon, Sharon Correll, Dorene Sommers, and Rebecca Vogt

Inspiring Others

In June 2021, Erie VAMC Office of Performance and Quality was identified as a team that embodies the strong collaboration and dedication that would be a model for others across VHA. We were invited to share our strong HRO journey, practices, and the impact on patient experience at the 3rd Annual Patient Experience Symposium.

Better Together

In August 2021, the Erie VAMC Cardiology team was selected as the winner of the VHA 2021 Patient Experience (PX) Symposium Innovation Competition in the Veteran category. Their innovation, *Care Closer to Home*, was selected by a panel of national PX staff and thousands of votes from VHA employees. *Care Closer to Home*, originated as a response to growing demand for cardiology care in Erie and our team sought ways to expand services. As a result of a strategic partnership with the Pittsburgh VA Healthcare System, we did just that – expanded cardiology services, improved Veteran satisfaction, and effectively managed resources for Veterans in northwest Pennsylvania.

Youth Volunteer Spotlight

In April 2021, Brooke Jackowski, an Erie VAMC student volunteer, received the James H. Parke Memorial Youth Scholarship for her volunteer work serving Veterans. John P. Brown, President of the James H. Parke Memorial Scholarship Board, presented Ms. Jackowski with the \$20,000 scholarship award. Ms. Jackowski served as an Erie VAMC student volunteer for five years and has provided 523 hours of service supporting the health and wellness of Veterans.

Dorene Sommers Recognized in VA Secretary McDonough's Budget Hearing

In a June 2021 hearing regrading VA's budget request for fiscal year 2022, VA Secretary McDonough highlighted Dorene Sommers – Associate Director, Patient Care Services – in his opening statement spotlighting her exemplary work in support of the Disaster Emergency Medical Personnel System (DEMPS) missions throughout the pandemic to ensure the safety of Veterans. This well-deserved recognition is the embodiment of our VA Core Values – integrity, commitment, advocacy, respect, and excellent (ICARE). Congratulations, Dorene!

Erie VAMC Names Dr. Borys Loza new Chief of Staff

Erie VAMC announced Dr. Borys Loza, MD, as the new Chief of Staff. Dr. Loza, who was appointed March 14, 2021, oversees management efforts for medical decisions made throughout the medical center and the five community based outpatient clinics. Prior to this role, he served as the Erie VAMC Medical Director of Primary Care since 2015.

Whole Health | Prioritizing Wellness

Setting the Standard

Whole Health puts Veterans in the driver's seat of their own health care.

The Whole Health approach to care empowers, equips, and treats Veterans so they can take charge of their health and well-being and live their lives to the fullest.

Whole Health starts with a simple question: **What matters to you?**

Whole Health includes all of you — your mind & your body.

Knowing yourself can deepen your Whole Health journey. It is important to know what tools work for you and fit into your lifestyle.

Whole Health resources help Veterans and employees identify their values, recognize challenges in living from those values, and explore how best to match up their life and values.

Taking the opportunity to learn and grow in your personal and work life can be empowering and positively affect your health and well-being.

Living Whole Health

Erie VA's Whole Health team remained connected – virtually and in person – with our Veterans and employees throughout the pandemic. Our team consistently delivered wellness management services and served as beacons of hope during uncertain times.

In May 2021, Erie VA Whole Health sponsored the VA2K Walk & Breath of Fresh Air Wellness Fair – a hybrid virtual and in-person three-day offering of Whole Health resources and instruction. The outdoor fair included a 2K Walk, Yoga, Cupping Sessions, and a Reiki Circle. A fresh fruit smoothie bar was provided by the Food and Nutrition Staff.





Practical WH Perspective

"With the help of Whole Health services, I was even able to cut down on the pain medications I take and some days I didn't have to take it at all."

– Whole Health Veteran

Live Whole Health.

1,018

UNIQUE
VETERANS
SERVED

5,861

VETERAN
ENCOUNTERS

2,699

BFA
ENCOUNTERS

737

BFA UNIQUES

1,010

VA VIDEO
CONNECT
ENCOUNTERS

147

VA VIDEO
CONNECT
UNIQUES



Whole Health Services

- Biofeedback
- Health coaching
- Yoga
- Battlefield Auricular Acupuncture (BFA)
- Acupuncture
- Cupping for Massage Therapy
- Tai Chi
- Guided Imagery
- Mindfulness Meditation
- Clinical Hypnosis
- Reiki
- Qi Gong

COVID-19 Pandemic | Protecting our Veterans, Staff, and Community

Our Top Priority: Safety First

Safe care is our mission. We are the best place for Veterans to receive health care.

We came together as a Veteran centered health care community in unique ways throughout the uncertain times presented by the pandemic. As a result, VA health care looks different - and will for the foreseeable future. We carefully and slowly reintroduced some traditional services in support of recovering through the pandemic. Our team remained extremely diligent in adhering to VA policies of universal masking, COVID-19 screening, social distancing, and infection control protocols.

We committed to vaccinating Veterans and staff, providing the best and safest care – helping Veterans stay connected to their loved ones and primary care providers.

We applaud all staff for their expertise and innovation – the hallmarks of the Erie VA Medical Center and our Community Based Outpatient Clinics. We thank our Veterans for relying on the Erie VA team for proactive, safe, and exceptional care.

2





COVID-19 Vaccines Administered



Veterans

J & J	Single Dose	1,133
Moderna	Dose 1	11,027
	Dose 2	9,602
	Dose 3	313

Total Veterans served 20,942



Staff

J & J	Single Dose	80
Moderna	Dose 1	770
	Dose 2	770



COVID-19 Tests Administered



Veterans
7,777



Staff
6,353

Delivering Exceptional Care

Erie Excels as High Reliability Organization

Empowering employees at every level of the organization has been the catalyst for the success at Erie VAMC. As a High Reliability Organization lead site, we have learned that success comes from consistency.

Our Veterans deserve exceptional care, and our staff deserve the best place to work.

In pursuit of these goals, we remain committed to engaging all employees, maintaining a culture of safety, and continuous process improvement – supporting an optimum culture where all employees are proactive problem solvers and patient advocates. This framework has transformed our organization – bolstering the trust and respect to deliver exceptional care.



22,146
UNIQUE
PATIENTS

270,074
OUTPATIENT
VISITS

206
ADMISSIONS

19,782
MALE

2,362
FEMALE

1,451
SURGICAL
PROCEDURES

90
MEDICINE

33
PSYCHOSOCIAL RESIDENTIAL
REHAB TREATMENT PROGRAM

48
COMMUNITY
LIVING CENTER

Veteran Satisfaction

91%
OVERALL PATIENT SATISFACTION

83%
OVERALL PATIENT RATING OF PROVIDER

93%
TRUST SCORE (measured in VSignals)

\$216.1M
TOTAL OPERATING BUDGET

\$143.2M
MEDICAL CENTER BUDGET

\$72.8M
NON-VA COMMUNITY CARE

\$8.9M
MAINTENANCE COSTS

Employee Engagement

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

This year, Erie VAMC Director John Gennaro asked Erie VA employees to participate in an inaugural Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) survey to support the work of the D&I committee and provide transparency in our future D&I strategic planning process.

Erie VA is proud of our longstanding commitment to fostering a workplace where employees can thrive. This year, we deepened our understanding of the evolving societal issues, acknowledged opportunities to engage untapped talent, and committed to shaping talent strategies to include current and future employees.

Our realization, heightened by the global pandemic and social injustice, reaffirmed that equity is not just imperative, it is simply the right thing to do – for our employees and the Veterans we serve.

To effectively serve and positively impact our Veterans and community, we need diverse talent. Moreover, 2020 proved that to strengthen trust across our Veteran and employee populations, we need diverse talent.

The D&I survey results were structured into **strengths** and **opportunities**, with **four overarching goals** informing the Erie VA Medical Center Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Access Plan.

A Diverse Workforce: Grow a diverse, high-performing workforce that reflects all segments of our society and values all aspects of our human diversity.

Diversity Inspired Leadership: Create and grow both informal and formal leadership opportunities and embolden leadership to promote and invest in the personal and professional growth of the workforce.

Community Impact: Create partnerships within the communities we serve through collaboration and engagement in multiple civic, social, public, academic, and governmental entities.

Safety in Diversity: Cultivate an inclusive environment and engaged workforce that feels empowered and safe in expressing ideas aimed at promoting diversity, inclusion, and equity.

Embracing diversity and inclusion makes practical sense, and even more importantly, we believe it is the right thing to do. By sharing these results, our thoughts, ideas, and opportunities, we hope that we can continue a broader conversation, that will allow us to learn and benefit together, as we work collectively to make an impact internally as a team and in the way we serve our Veterans.

The next step – in FY22 – is developing specific tactics that align with the 4 goals outlined above.

Employee Satisfaction

One of most important lessons amplified by the pandemic is that employee engagement, retention, and satisfaction directly impact the Veteran experience. This means Veterans served have increased satisfaction when there is high engagement within the workforce.

Each day, we carry the VA's I CARE Core Values as we engage Veterans – exhibiting integrity, commitment, advocacy, respect, and excellence – we contribute to the mission and do our best to serve those who served.

75.5%

Best Place to Work percentage

UP FROM 68% IN FY18

3.99

Overall Satisfaction out of 5

UP FROM 3.84 IN FY18

3.96

Organizational Satisfaction out of 5

UP FROM 3.69 IN FY18

4.14

Recommend My Organization out of 5:

UP FROM 3.92 IN FY18

78.5%

Servant Leader Index

UP FROM 72% IN FY18

875

TOTAL EMPLOYEES

178

NURSES (RNS)

232

VETERAN EMPLOYEES

46

PHYSICIANS

Valuable Volunteers

Volunteers are a priceless asset to our operations. Throughout the pandemic, our volunteers worked earnestly to honor our nation's commitment to our Veterans and their families. The DAV Volunteer Transportation Network Program continuously provided free transportation to and from VA medical appointments for Veterans who did not have reliable transportation. Erie VA is grateful for the continued response to help America's heroes during the global pandemic.

271

VOLUNTEERS

39,769

VOLUNTEER HOURS

6

YOUTH VOLUNTEERS

Behavioral Health and Mental Health Support

Erie VAMC’s Behavioral Health Clinic (BHC) provides a wide range of services to help Veterans meet their mental health and substance abuse recovery goals. Rated as one of the best in the nation for patient care and experience, the Behavioral Health Clinic offers individual therapy, group therapy, and medication management.

Facing challenges can be stressful, overwhelming, and cause strong emotions in everyday life – and heightened during a public health pandemic. Fully equipped with best practices developed during the beginning of the pandemic, Erie’s BHC team maintained momentum – ensuring Veterans remained connected to support groups and providers both virtually and in-person.

Services at a Glance

- Primary Care/Mental Health Integration
- Psychosocial Residential Rehabilitation Treatment Program (PR RTP)
- Substance Abuse Treatment
- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) Treatment
- Homeless Care Support
- Peer Support
- Psychosocial Rehabilitation and Recovery Center
- RANGE: Case Management (for rural counties)
- Veterans Employment Services/Job Club
- Veterans Justice Outreach
- Crisis Intervention & Suicide Prevention
- Military Sexual Trauma Support



Safeguarding Our Heroes | Vaccine Acceptance

VA made significant progress in vaccinating Veterans, their family members, their caregivers, and VA providers against the COVID-19 virus in the winter of 2020. As the spring and summer months approached, BH team members knew more work needed to be done.

Committed to maximizing efforts to address health disparities, and keeping Veterans and staff healthy, eleven BH providers helped address vaccine hesitancy in person and via social media – to increase vaccination rates among Veterans receiving mental health care services. Each provider shared personal quotes noting why they chose to receive COVID-19 vaccine.

To encourage participation in the vaccination roll out, Minority Veterans Program Coordinator Jonathan Atkinson, partnered with local community leaders – also Veterans themselves – to produce a video encouraging Veterans to roll up their sleeves and help protect America. By end of FY21, the video garnered 900 views.

Afghanistan – Let’s Talk About It

Veterans who served in Afghanistan experienced a range of challenging emotions related to the U.S withdrawal from the country and the rapidly unfolding events in August 2021. Recognizing the impact, the Erie BHC quickly led the way in supporting Veterans and Veteran employees who were struggling. The BHC provided virtual and in-person opportunities for Veterans to come together, receive tools and resources, and learn how to cope during the difficult time.

2,484

VA VIRTUAL
CONNECT
UNIQUES

5,093

PATIENTS
SERVED

48,533

VISITS

20,507

VA VIRTUAL
CONNECT
ENCOUNTERS

Faces of Recovery

Across the region, Veterans in recovery are celebrating their successes and sharing them with loved ones. These inspiring successes often go unnoticed by other Veterans and the region-at-large. Sharing and celebrating victories connects Veterans to one another and empowers those who are struggling to know they are not alone.

The Erie VA Medical Center Behavioral Health (BH) team is committed to eliminating the stigma Veterans in recovery often face and educating caregivers, loved ones, the public, and other Veterans that recovery is possible.

In celebration of Health Awareness Month, Local Recovery Coordinator Anne Rill opted to exhibit the annual Faces of Recovery stories in the BH building and across Erie VA social media platforms. Four local Veterans graciously agreed to be interviewed, photographed, and share their recovery stories online. Each heartwarming account encouraged and inspired other Veterans to reach out and take the first step toward optimal health. Attaching a face to each story reminds Veterans, caregivers, employees, and friends of the importance of human connection and of the importance of healing – mentally and physically.

Faces of Recovery was born out of the #MaketheConnection initiative. This is a national, VA-developed initiative with an aim to recognize the importance of mental health awareness and efforts toward suicide prevention.

Annual Erie VAMC Mental Health Summit

Navigating the pandemic in 2020 required everyone to adjust to a new normal. This year, the pandemic presented challenges and opportunities to the path forward – flexibility – adapting and adjusting daily.

Held in September 2021, the annual summit theme was Suicide Prevention and Crisis Management. Veterans, family members, caregivers gained access to resources, strategies, and skills to use when experiencing emotional crises.

Collaborators included VA Pittsburgh Health Care University Drive, Safe Harbor of UPMC, and Stairways Behavioral Health.

PR RTP Earns Exceptional Review

The Erie VA Psychosocial Rehabilitation Residential Treatment Program (PR RTP) had their initial Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) Accreditation survey in early June 2021.

Congratulations to the PR RTP Staff for an excellent survey with 0 findings – this is an impressive achievement for an initial review. Our PR RTP team was prepared, engaged, and continues to provide excellent care of our Veterans. Their teamwork and commitment to service really shined through.

PR RTP assists Veterans grappling with a mental health and/or substance use disorder requiring care that more extensive than outpatient treatment. The 8-bed PR RTP bridges the gap between inpatient and outpatient behavioral health care to help Veterans accept accountability of their recovery while providing personalized treatment based on the Veteran's needs, diagnoses, and recovery goals.

Suicide Prevention Team

If you are or know of a Veteran in crisis, contact the Veterans Crisis Line for confidential support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. **You are not alone.**



Christi Seth



Shannon Brown



Brittany Miklos

 Call 1-800-273-8255
and press 1

 Chat Online at
veteranscrisisline.net

 Text 838255

 **Veterans
Crisis Line**
1-800-273-8255 **PRESS 1**

Care and Support Amid Uncertainty

Social work services are an integral component of VA health care. Social workers assist Veterans in a variety of settings to include primary care clinics, during hospitalization, in mental health and rehabilitation units, upon enrollment in specialty programs to name a few.

The Erie VA Medical Social Work team continuously worked to assist Veterans, family members, and caregivers in resolving housing, finance, relationship, and physical ability concerns throughout the pandemic.

The team worked with internal programs and external community partners in support of Veteran treatment goals and aspirations.

Medical Social Work Assistance

- In-home health care
- Respite services
- Adult day care
- Hospice
- Caregiver support
- Visual impairment services
- Spinal cord injury
- Related disability services
- Intimate partner violence/domestic violence support and services
- Discharge planning
- Case management for Veterans assigned to a VA primary care provider

Post-9/11 Military to VA Program

In the aftermath of September 11, 2001, countless brave men and women stepped up to serve their country. Among those called to action are the Post-9/11 Veterans we are honored to serve today. It is important we do more than remember them.

Over the past 20 years, Erie VA has dedicated resources to ensuring Post-9/11 Veterans have the right support services in place to meet your needs and support your aspirations and goals. What started as the VA Liaison Program in 2003 has expanded to serve all Post-9/11 era Veterans needing case management and coordination. Today, our program has transformed into a proactive, comprehensive, and integrated Post-9/11 Case Management Program (M2VA).

The Erie VAMC Military to VA team works tirelessly to help Veterans navigate VA services and support them through the transition to civilian life and beyond.

In the wake of the tragedy that occurred in Afghanistan in August 2021, our M2VA Program immediately activated to proactively connect with Veterans – ensuring their awareness of VA resources and support available across the facility.

Post-9/11 M2VA Team



Tammy Breter



Colby Mitchell-El



Kelly Mallory



Viola Gross

2,438

POST 9/11 VETERANS SERVED

Caregiver Support Program

Spouses and caregivers are often on the front lines of helping Veterans navigate life at home – likely more than usual during the pandemic. The sole purpose of VA's Caregiver Support program is to provide support, education, and resources to caregivers of Veterans. On average, family members and caregivers of Veterans spend more than 20 hours a week taking care of their loved ones.

2nd Annual Caregiver Summit

In May 2021, the Erie VA Caregiver Support Program virtually hosted the 2nd Annual Caregiver Summit focused on inclusive care. Inclusive Care is a system-wide approach to Veteran care that embraces, engages, and empowers caregivers, clinicians, and Veterans throughout their entire care journey. Inclusive Care improves health outcomes, quality of life, and system of performance. It is truly team-based, with care being a partnership among the clinical veteran care team and family caregivers.

Resources During the Pandemic:

- General Caregiver Support Group
- Mind Over Matter Group
- Caregivers FIRST Groups

- Journal Your Way to Joy
- Monthly National Caregiver Support Education Call
- Estate Planning Seminars
- Advance Care Workshops
- Caregiver Dementia Resource Fair
- National Caregiver Awareness Month
- Caregiver Corner Newsletter
- SAVE Training on Suicide Prevention
- Community Outreach



Social Worker of the Year

The Social Worker of the Year Award aims to motivate Social Work employees to strive for excellence through achievement of our organizational goals. The Award promotes excellence in VA Social Work service and provides an opportunity for professional recognition and is awarded in March – National Social Work Month.

Nominators must identify how the social worker demonstrates an outstanding contribution in a minimum of 4 of 8 elements: Veteran Centered Care, Patient Safety, Continuous Improvement, Integrity, Commitment, Advocacy, Respect, and Excellence.

Nominations are accepted January 1 – January 31 each year. This year, Erie VAMC was proud to present Melissa Bucci, LCSW with the Social Worker of the Year award after being nominated for her exceptional efforts, going above and beyond in service to local Veterans. Congratulations, Melissa!



Extending Access to Care

The onset of the pandemic highlighted the importance of innovation in health care and increased the need for access to virtual care. The good news is VA has been at the forefront of virtual care for several years – ensuring Veterans can access care when and where they need it.

We understand Veteran satisfaction increases when they feel – and know – their health care is centered around them, and they have convenient access to care.

Erie excelled in navigating the unpredictable pandemic and providing optimal virtual care experiences – and staying connected to our Veterans, their families, and caregivers.

Whether at home, the clinic, or the hospital, VA telehealth technologies make it easier for Veterans to access the right care in the right place at the right time. We thank our Veteran patients for embracing virtual care and our providers for delivering quality care – even while social distancing.

VISN 4 Tele Urgent Care

Veterans are now able to participate in a secure video chat or phone appointment with a VA tele urgent care provider.

VISN 4 Tele Urgent Care uses VA Video Connect (VVC) app to conduct private and secure appointments in a virtual medical room - from anywhere - using the camera on your smart phone, computer, or tablet.

A registered nurse will provide advice and guide your care for prompt service if tele urgent care is right for you.

Get VA health care now!
1-833-TELE-URGENT
(1-833-835-3874)



Available 8 a.m. – midnight
365 days a year
Overnight hours coming soon!
www.visn4.va.gov/tele-urgent

Tele Urgent Care may help treat many common conditions including:

- minor cuts, scrapes, rashes, insect bites, and skin irritations
- common cold, cough, headaches, and flu symptoms
- sprains, back pain and joint pain/stiffness
- upset stomach and constipation



7,389

UNIQUE VETERANS SERVED
USING TELEHEALTH

32,202

ENCOUNTERS COMPLETED VIA TELEHEALTH

8,383

VA VIDEO CONNECT (VVC) ENCOUNTERS

24,653

TELE-MENTAL HEALTH CARE ENCOUNTERS



3,482

UNIQUE VETERANS
USING SECURE
MESSAGING

10,030

MY HEALTHEVET
(MHV) VETERANS
WITH AN ACCOUNT

35,514

ANSWERED
MESSAGES

64,825

PRESCRIPTION
REFILLS THROUGH
MHV

141

UNIQUE PATIENTS
SERVED VIA
E-CONSULT

Advancing Virtual Care | ATLAS Open House

Health knows no bounds.

That is why VA teamed up with Philips to expand virtual care to Veterans. Erie VA is a proud collaborator, along with the Linesville VFW Post 7842 - on the ATLAS site in Linesville, PA.

ATLAS - Accessing Telehealth through Local Area Stations

provides Veterans the ability to check-in with their VA providers and clinicians via a secure, high-speed internet connection.

Veterans in rural areas often lack the access to stable, secure internet service. ATLAS bridges the gap and brings care closer to home. Veterans can visit the site to receive a wide variety of clinical services that do not require hands-on exams.

In September, Erie VA hosted the ATLAS Open House with the Linesville VFW.

Erie is one of the first in the nation to launch an ATLAS site.

The ATLAS Advantage

- Saves travel time and transportation costs
- Secure internet connection in a private space
- Robust broadband service for Veterans in rural areas
- Technology assistance – VFW Attendant on site

VA Health

Available Services

- Primary care
- Mental health counseling
- Physical and occupational therapies
- Blind and visual impairment rehabilitation
- Social work
- Nutrition
- Whole Health



Modernization | Investing in Patient-Centered Care

As a nation, we make a promise to take care of those who take care of us. At Erie VA, we are making good on that promise. We make every effort to serve Veterans as well as they served us – daily.

This year, we recommitted to this pledge by expanding specialty care services, increasing Primary Care and Community Living Center (CLC) footprints, and modernizing our Chiller Plant. Awareness of the unique, complex, and evolving needs of Veterans requires further investment in patient-centered care.

As we elevate the care available to Veterans, we also implement essential infrastructure updates. The care received and the environment in which we serve Veterans, are equally important.

Our leadership team allocated over \$50 million dollars in projects and infrastructure improvements. The three-year plan, for the main campus in Erie, also includes framework improvements for the cooler plant to keeps Veterans and staff comfortable across the facility.



Primary Care Expansion

The new Primary Care expansion plans to construct 11,100 square feet of modernized care spaces for Veterans – including a new clinic area, as well as 5,200 square feet of renovated existing hospital space.

Expansion includes 27 exam rooms, 2 consult rooms, 2 procedure rooms, and 5 women’s health rooms. Separate waiting areas allow for shorter paths to treatment areas. The new layout also takes pandemic operation into account by providing alternate entry points and 5 exam rooms with negative air pressure.

Surgical Services Expansion | Western Market Initiative

Dedicated funds from the strategic collaboration expands services to include a third operating room and/or hiring additional staff.

Chiller Plant

Construction of the new Chiller Plant on campus is a critical infrastructure upgrade that eliminates the need for future chiller unit replacements, provides more consistent heating and cooling to the patient care areas, and will result in operational cost savings for the facility.

Main Line – Phone Tree

814-868-8661
1-800-274-8387 (toll free)

- Press 1** Pharmacy
- Press 2** Appointments & Specialty Care Providers
- Press 3** Nurse Line
- Press 4** Eligibility
- Press 5** Billing
- Press 7** Veterans Crisis Line

Behavioral Health Clinic
814-860-2038

Caregiver Support Program
814-860-2657

Eligibility

814-860-2970

Medical Social Work

814-860-2529

Medication Refills

814-868-6284
1-800-274-8387 (toll-free)

Non-VA Care Notification

Notify within 72 hours
814-860-2800 (M-F 8a-4:30p)
814-868-8661 (After hours, ask for Medical Administration Assistant)

Release of Information

814-860-2212

Post-9/11 Military 2 VA

(OEF/OIF/OND)
814-860-2965

Veterans Crisis Line

www.veteranscrisisline.net
1-800-273-8255 (press 1)
Text - 838255

Whole Health Program

814-860-2437

Women Veterans Program

814-860-2907

VA Mobile Applications

mobile.va.gov

Our Community-Based VA Clinic Locations

Ashtabula County	Crawford County	McKean County	Venango County	Warren County
1,989 VETERANS SERVED	2,859 VETERANS SERVED	1,077 VETERANS SERVED	2,018 VETERANS SERVED	2,310 VETERANS SERVED
9,550 OUTPATIENT VISITS	10,930 OUTPATIENT VISITS	3,680 OUTPATIENT VISITS	9,529 OUTPATIENT VISITS	10,707 OUTPATIENT VISITS
2044 Lambrose Ln Ashtabula, OH 44004 866-463-0912 or 814-868-8661, press 2	16954 Conneaut Lake Rd Meadville, PA 16335 866-463-0912 or 814-868-8661, press 2	20 Foster Brook Blvd Bradford, PA 16701 814-368-3019 or 814-868-8661, press 2	464 Allegheny Blvd Franklin, PA 16323 866-962-3260 or 814-868-8661, press 2	3 Farm Colony Dr North Warren, PA 16365 866-682-3250 or 814-868-8661, press 2

*Please note, all CBOC telephone numbers are routed through the Erie VAMC Call Center. Our Call Center is equipped to handle most patient requests.

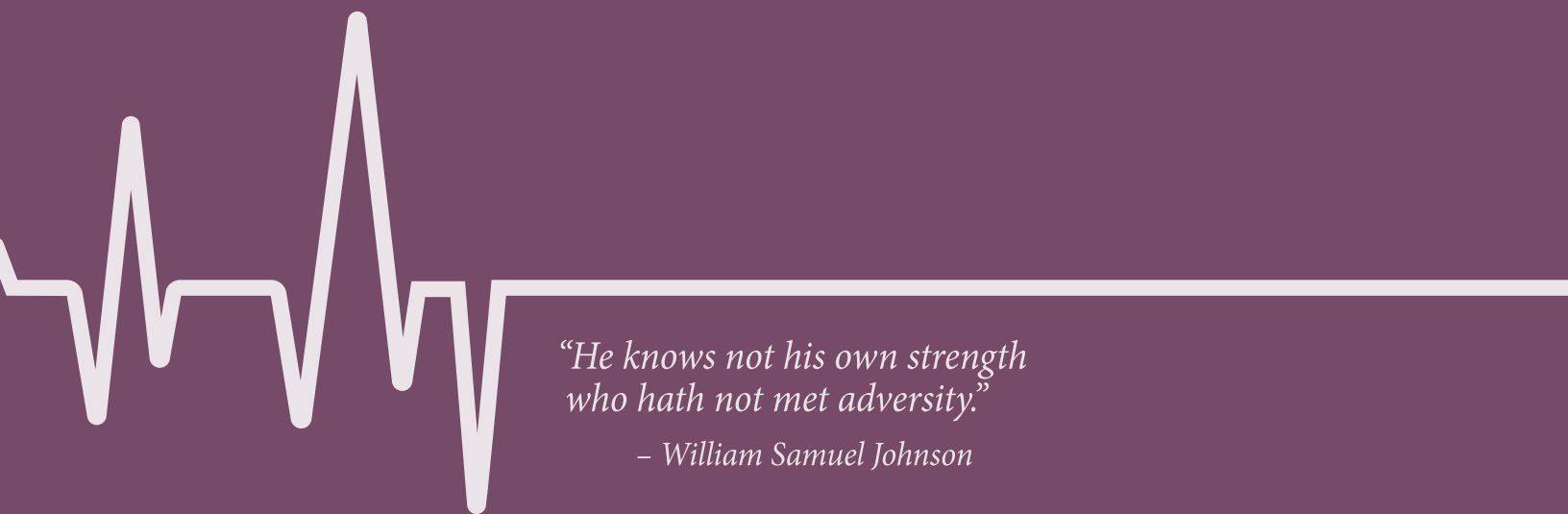
Community Living Center Expansion



Covered Walkway and Green Space

A critical component of campus updates is the second phase of our CLC – our VA Nursing Home. We are privileged to operate one of over 100 CLCs across the country. The expansion will build 20 private rooms with private baths.

Providing covered walkways to protect Veteran patient travel during inclement weather, this new pathway and green space project is near final completion. In addition to the walkways, a new CLC entrance canopy was installed to extend the coverage. CLC residents will also enjoy a new outdoor garden and patio space during warmer seasons.



*“He knows not his own strength
who hath not met adversity.”*

– William Samuel Johnson

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health Administration
Erie VA Medical Center